

STATE OF MINNESOTA
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, LAND SURVEYING,
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, GEOSCIENCE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

In the matter of
Kim Albrightson, d/b/a Albrightson & Associates

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND
CEASE AND DESIST ORDER

TO: KIM ALBRIGHTSON
Albrightson & Associates,
12872 32nd Street South
Afton, Minnesota 55001-1696

RECEIVED
NOV 14 2006

The Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design ("Board") is authorized pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 214.10 and 326.111 (2006) to review complaints concerning the unauthorized practice of architecture, engineering, land surveying, landscape architecture, geoscience and interior design, and to take action pursuant to those statutes whenever appropriate.

The Board received complaints concerning Kim Albrightson and her business, Albrightson & Associates ("Respondent"). The Board's Complaint Committee ("Committee") reviewed the information. The parties have agreed that this matter may now be resolved by this Settlement Agreement and Cease and Desist Order.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between Respondent and the Committee as follows:

1. Jurisdiction. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 326.111, subd. 3 (2006), the Board is authorized to issue an order requiring a person to cease and desist from the unauthorized

practice of architecture. Respondent is subject to jurisdiction of the Board with respect to the matters referred to in this Settlement Agreement.

2. Facts. This Settlement Agreement is based upon the following facts:

a. Respondent is not currently and never has been licensed by the Board as an architect in the State of Minnesota.

b. On May 3, 2005, the Board sent Respondent a letter explaining it was conducting an investigation of whether the Respondent may have held herself out as an architect or used a description that tends to convey the impression that she is licensed as an architect, without being licensed in the State of Minnesota, in her marketing materials. The letter asked for the names of any architect employed by Respondent, a copy of Respondent's business or calling card used between January 1, 2003 and May 3, 2005, copies of any marketing materials distributed between January 1, 2003 and May 3, 2005, and copies of articles authored by the Respondent and published between January 1, 2003 and May 3, 2005.

c. On May 23, 2005, Respondent responded to the Board's letter dated May 3, 2005 by submitting a letter and one attachment by facsimile. The Respondent said that she does not have an architect on staff, that she is listed on line in the Not So Big House directory and Green Building Professionals directory; that her website is www.shukka.com, and that she claims authorship for all articles posted on her website. The letter said it included a business card but a card was not received with the letter. A true and correct copy of Respondent's May 23, 2005 letter is attached as Exhibit A.

d. On August 19, 2005, the Board sent the Respondent a second letter

requesting the name(s) of any Minnesota licensed architect(s) employed by the Respondent or her company, a copy of the Respondent's business or calling card, copies of all distributed marketing materials, and a copy of each article for which she claimed authorship. On August 30, 2005, the Respondent answered the letter, sending requested information.

e. Prior to corrective action recently taken by the Respondent, Respondent's website and other advertising consistently and repeatedly described Respondent as a "professional architectural designer" and as "practicing architectural design". An article on Respondent's website entitled Who is Albrightson & Albrightson began with: "For nearly 20 years, I've been practicing architectural design and honing in on my "gift" to create homes so functional that clients literally save time by living in them. (Emphasis added.) A true and correct copy of the article on Respondent's website as described is attached as Exhibit B.

f. Prior to corrective action recently taken by Respondent, Respondent's website contained a written testimonial appearing to be written by a client. In an answer to a question asking for advice when "choosing an architectural designer," the testimonial consistently used the word architect:

Tour houses that the architect has designed. Encourage the architect to point out features of these homes including both practical and artistic features. Find out what differentiates this architect from others. Ask the architect what they think their role is. One needs to find an architect that thinks of himself/herself as the project manager, not only in design, but also throughout the whole building process. The architect should be the owner's advocate. They need to

make frequent, if not daily, visits to the site to ensure that the building of the home reflects the design intent. There are always going to be times when the interpretation of the house plan by the builder differs from that of the architect. The architect needs to be available or on site to ensure that the correct interpretation of the plan is followed. As the construction progresses, there may be opportunities for the addition of features not thought of during the design process. These features should be apparent to the designer and should be discussed with the homeowners as an additional design option. Spontaneous additions to the house plan are additional benefits that a good architect brings to the building process. Also, remember that the architects' fee is negligible in comparison to the construction costs of the home. From our perspective, the architect has the most important role in the building of a home. Without them, your house is not a truly custom home. (Emphasis added.) A true and correct copy of the entire testimonial, taken from Respondent's website prior to the time corrective action was taken by the Respondent is attached as Exhibit C.

g. Prior to the corrective action recently taken by Respondent, information on the website included Respondent's drawings for the home of a client located in Baytown, Minnesota which were entitled "Architectural Drawings," and contained extensive "Architectural Plan General Notes." The drawings required specific work be accomplished "for approval by architect," seven (7) times and twice direct the "Contractor to coordinate and verify all columns, millwork and cabinetry locations with architect". A true and correct copy of the drawings as they appeared on Respondent's website, are on file and available in the Board office.

h. The description of Respondent in the Green Building Professionals Directory advertises Albrightson & Associates, identified Respondent and includes the

phrase "architectural design." A true and correct copy of the online directory is attached as Exhibit D.

i. Respondent was listed in the 2003 Minnesota Woman's Directory Press, Inc., Women's Directory under the heading Architects/Architectural Design. A true and correct copy of the online directory is attached as Exhibit E.

j. Respondent's business was listed in the 2004 Yellow Book under the headings of "Architects" and "Home Designing & Planning Svce." A true and correct copy of the online directory is attached as Exhibit F.

k. Respondent has authored several articles published in the Parade of Homes magazine from 2003 through 2005. The articles appeared on Respondent's website, www.Shukka.com. The website bears a 2005 copyright symbol. The articles consistently and repeatedly refer to Respondent as an "architectural designer" and describe her work as "architectural design." True and correct copies of several published articles, taken from Respondent's website, are attached as Exhibit G.

l. In 2003, Respondent made a presentation at the International Market Square Home Design Show. The Presentation was entitled: Shukka: The Holistic Approach to Architecture. A true and correct copy of the Respondent's presentation is attached as Exhibit H.

3. Violations. Respondent admits that the facts specified above show that she held herself out as an architect and used descriptions in marketing materials that tended to convey the impression that she is licensed as an architect in Minnesota, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 326.02 subds. 1 and 2, (2006) and that the facts recited above constitute

sufficient grounds for the action specified below.

4. Enforcement Action. Respondent and the Committee agree that the Board should issue an Order in accordance with the following terms:

a. Cease and Desist Order. Respondent shall cease and desist from holding herself out as an architect in Minnesota, from practicing architecture in Minnesota, and from further violations of Minn. Stat. §§ 326.02 to 326.15 (2006) until such time as she becomes licensed as a professional architect in the State of Minnesota.

b. The Respondent shall cease using the term "architect" and phrases as "architectural designer", "architectural design" or any other phrase or description that tends to convey the impression she is licensed as an architect in Minnesota and shall remove such terminology or any variation thereof from her business cards, website, stationery, contracts, signs, marketing materials and advertisements used in association with her business activities in Minnesota or solicitation of Minnesota clients. Respondent shall provide documentation to the Board verifying that this corrective action has been completed within sixty (60) days of the date of this Order.

c. Respondent shall contact all directories in which she is listed as an "architect" or "architectural designer" or as engaged in the business or practice of "architectural design" or any similar term, and request the listing be changed to remove such terminology. Directories to be contacted include but are not limited to the Minnesota Woman's Directory, the Yellow Book Directory, and the various city directories referenced in section 2 above. Respondent shall provide documentation to the Board verifying that this corrective action has been completed within sixty (60) days of the date of this Order.

5. Judicial Relief. If Respondent violates paragraph 4 above, a district court of this state may, upon application of the Committee, enter an order enjoining Respondent from such unauthorized practices and granting the Board its costs, reasonable attorney fees, and other appropriate relief.

6. Waiver of Respondent's Rights. For the purpose of this Settlement Agreement, Respondent waives all procedures and proceedings before the Board to which Respondent may be entitled under the Minnesota and United States constitutions, statutes, or the rules of the Board, including the right to dispute the allegations against Respondent and to dispute the appropriateness of discipline in a contested case proceeding pursuant to Minn. Stat. ch. 14. Respondent agrees that upon the application of the Committee without notice to or an appearance by Respondent, the Board may issue an Order containing the enforcement action specified in paragraph 4 herein. Respondent waives the right to any judicial review of the Order by appeal, writ of certiorari, or otherwise.

7. Board Rejection of Settlement Agreement and Cease and Desist Order. In the event the Board in its discretion does not approve this Settlement Agreement or a lesser remedy than specified herein, this Settlement Agreement and Cease and Desist Order shall be null and void and shall not be used for any purpose by either party hereto. If this Settlement Agreement is not approved and a contested case proceeding is initiated pursuant to Minn. Stat. ch. 14, Respondent agrees not to object to the Board's initiation of the proceeding and hearing the case on the basis that the Board has become disqualified due to its review and consideration of this Settlement Agreement and the record.

8. Record. This Settlement Agreement, related investigative reports and other

documents shall constitute the entire record of the proceedings herein upon which the Order is based. The investigative reports, other documents, or summaries thereof may be filed with the Board with this Settlement Agreement.

9. Data Classification. Under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, this Settlement Agreement and Cease and Desist Order is classified as public data upon its issuance by the Board. Minn. Stat. § 13.41, subd. 4 (2006). All documents in the record shall maintain the data classification to which they are entitled under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. ch. 13. They shall not, to the extent they are not already public documents, become public merely because they are referenced herein. A summary of this Order will appear in the Board's newsletter. A summary will also be sent to the national discipline data bank pertaining to the practice of Architecture.

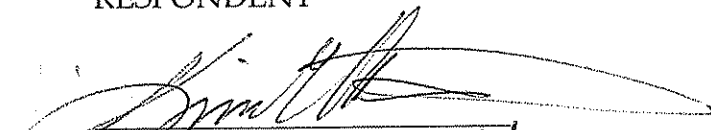
10. Entire Agreement. Respondent has read, understood, and agreed to this Settlement Agreement and is freely and voluntarily signing it. This Settlement Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. Respondent is not relying on any other agreement or representations of any kind, verbal or otherwise.

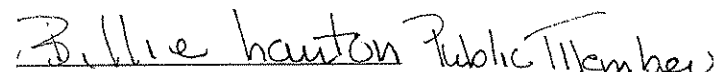
11. Counsel. Respondent is aware that she may choose to be represented by legal counsel in this matter. Respondent knowingly waived legal representation.

12. Service. If approved by the Board, a copy of this Settlement Agreement and Cease and Desist Order shall be served personally or by first class mail on Respondent. The order shall be effective and deemed issued when it is signed by the Chair of the Board.

RESPONDENT

COMPLAINT COMMITTEE


Kim Albrightson Albrightson & Assoc.
on

By:  Public Member
Billie Lawton, PM

Albrightson & Associates

Committee Chair

Dated: 11/13, 2006

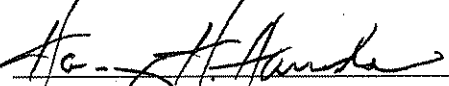
Dated: 11-16, 2006

ORDER

Upon consideration of the foregoing Settlement Agreement and based upon all the files, records and proceedings herein, all terms of the Settlement Agreement are approved and adopted and hereby issued as an Order of this Board this the 8TH day of December 2006.

MINNESOTA BOARD OF
ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING,
LAND SURVEYING, LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE, GEOSCIENCE AND
INTERIOR DESIGN.

By:



Harvey H. Harvala, PE
Board Chair

ALBRIGHTSON & ASSOCIATES

RECL

MAY 24 2005

12827 32ND STREET SOUTH AFTON, MN 55001

651-436-7877 • 888-875-6188

FAX 651-436-7633

WWW.SHUKKA.COM • KIM.SHUKKA.COM

DATE: MAY 23, 2005

TO: MINNESOTA BOARD OF ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, LAND
SURVEYING, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, GEOSCIENCE &
INTERIOR DESIGN
85 EAST 7TH PLACE, SUITE 160
ST. PAUL, MN 55101
ATTN: PATRICIA MUNKEL-OLSON

RE: INVESTIGATION FILE #2005-0074

Patricia,

I am writing in response to the letter I received regarding my professional conduct.
In answer to your requests:

1. I do not currently have an architect on staff.
2. My business card is enclosed.
3. My website is www.shukka.com. All information about my business can be accessed there. I am listed on line in the Not So Big House directory and the Green Building Professionals directory.
4. All articles for which I claim authorship are posted on my website.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Kim E. Albrightson
Owner
Albrightson & Associates

EXHIBIT A

- What is Shukka?
- Who Lives In A Shukka Home?
- May We Show You Some Shukka Homes?
- How Do We Design a Home For You?
- Who is Albrightson & Associates?

Who is Albrightson & Associates?



"My vision for [REDACTED] is to provide home planning services that specialize in creating 'personalized' custom homes tailored to function efficiently for the lifestyle of the owners while presenting extraordinary, timeless aesthetic design."

Kim Albrightson
President and Owner

For nearly 20 years, I've been practicing architectural design and honing in on my "gift" to create homes so functional that clients literally save time by living in them. In 1994, I launched Albrightson Design, now [REDACTED]. My passion for designing homes is intense and I share my talent and expertise with people who want homes that are unique, functional, and distinctively their own.

At [REDACTED], our approach in designing homes is the SHUKKA® Philosophy. To be clear, we didn't invent SHUKKA®, we simply noticed it and now apply it to the designs we create. In a SHUKKA® home form follows function, time and space are saved wherever possible, and architectural details distinguish each and every space.

[REDACTED] provides services ranging from consultation to construction administration. What sets us apart is the Lifestyle Analysis Interview in which you participate. The Lifestyle Analysis Interview is perhaps the most important step in designing a custom home. We believe that you are important in the design process. Together, we virtually "walk through" your dream home to learn your needs and wants. We also help you imagine the possibilities and share SHUKKA® elements that may be incorporated.

While other architectural firms may spend one or two hours with clients,

EXHIBIT B

[REDACTED] will spend from three or four hours, and has spent more than 12 hours when necessary, to ask you questions, listen to your wants, and understand how you intend to live during the week as well as on the weekend. We delve into how you interact as a couple, with your children, and with extended family visitors, friends, and neighbors. We find out what hobbies you have and how we can make your home function for each of these activities, often making double and triple use of the spaces created within and outside of the home. Sometimes couples have differences. Once we evaluate both sides, we usually discover a solution that not only meets each individual's need but also makes for a fabulous design element, which often times exceeds both their expectations.

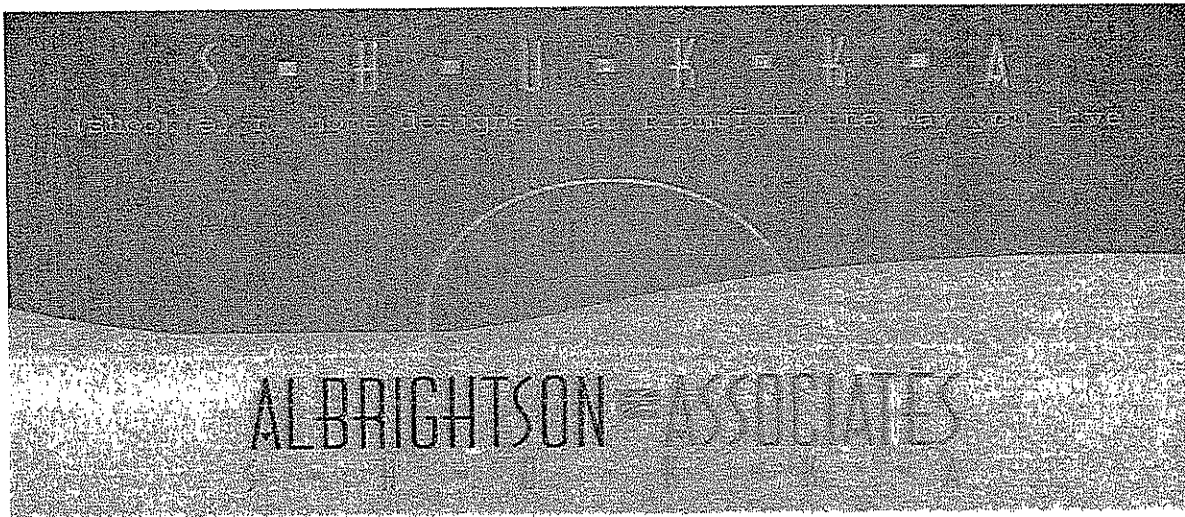
You will find the Lifestyle Analysis Interview to be an exciting and dynamic process as well as one of discovery. It is also the catalyst that propels [REDACTED] into the design stage. We've designed scores of homes fully implementing the SHUKKA® Philosophy and we've incorporated SHUKKA® elements specific to renovation requirements in many others.

In 2001 [REDACTED] was featured on the Home Renovation Project on the Before and After Show on HGTV. Most recently, [REDACTED] was recognized for the Best Architecture (for \$514,000 to \$1.1 million category single family home) and Best Closet Design in the 2001 Trillium Awards. In 2000, we received the Trillium Awards Best Architecture in the \$324,000 to \$420,000 category single family home.

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Testimonial – The Metzgers

Q: Did you begin your home building process with a custom home in mind?

A: Yes. We had been house shopping for about three months and had not been able to find anything that we loved. We had previously built a “custom” house in Dallas and were willing to wait for the time that it takes to build a house. The funny thing is that we thought custom meant taking a house plan and customizing it by changing a few things and choosing all the colors. We had no idea as to how detailed the custom home process really was.

Q: How did you hear about Kim Albrightson?

A: Our realtor suggested we go and look at a house out in Somerset Wisconsin designed by Kim and built by Mike Hartman. We immediately fell in love with the ergonomic features, the idea that everything should have its own space, the layout of the rooms, the repetitive artistic architectural features, and the craftsmanship.

Q: Name three things that you find make it easier to live in your Shukka home.

A: The stairway to the lower floor is very wide and has several landings. We are able to move furniture to the lower floor without the wall obtaining the usual dents and dings. Every room has ample storage space for all of the objects associated with each area. However, the storage space is in the form of custom cabinets that accentuate the room. The raised appliances like the washer, dryer, and dishwasher is an ergonomic feature that has made laundry and loading the dishwasher easy and practical.

Q: Do you have a favorite room? Which one and why?

A: Our favorite room is the music room. It has the most dramatic architectural detail including the suspended beams, the two-sided fireplace, the track lighting, and a gorgeous view of the backyard. It is also one of the places where we enjoy spending time with each other the most by making music.

Q: How do guests react upon entering your home?

A: Each guest is amazed by the beauty and craftsmanship of the home. As we take guests on tours of the entire home, they are even more impressed by the practical features of the home and are surprised at how the ergonomic features are incorporated into beautiful structures, i.e. the broom closet is a part of the pantry which is recessed and built using the cabinet detail and wood found in the kitchen.

EXHIBIT C

Q: What is the most important aspect/detail of your Shukka home? Why?

A: The entire home feels like one continuous living area. The main living areas flow into each other and although the space is very large, it feels very cozy and inviting to us and to our guests.

Q: Is there anything in your home that you would have done differently? Why or why not?

A: No.

Q: From your perspective, please comment on the design process including the Lifestyle Analysis Interview.

A: We think that Kim Albrightson has defined what a custom home was meant to be. We began the design process with a blank sheet of paper and photos from magazines and books of rooms and styles we liked. Our Lifestyle Analysis Interview was an eight-hour process where Kim got to know us and all of our habits. The amount of detailed information we shared with her was immense. Everything we talked about was incorporated into the design of our home. Each piece of furniture that we already owned was measured and incorporated into the size of a room. The size of our dogs was utilized to establish the kitchen counter height to prevent them from stealing food from the countertops. The amount of clothing we owned was utilized to determine the closet space. Even our height and reach was considered when determining where to place the higher closet rods.

Q: Would you recommend that others build a custom home? Why or why not?

A: More emphasis needs to be placed on what a custom home really means. Kim Albrightson's custom home is entirely different from any other "custom" home we've experienced. This includes those of million dollar builders. To build a Shukka home will make living in your house an experience you'll love. There's not a day when we are not amazed that we own and live in this house.

Q: What advice would you give to other homeowners in choosing an architectural designer?

A: Tour houses that the architect has designed. Encourage the architect to point out features of these homes including both practical and artistic features. Find out what differentiates this architect from others. Ask the architect what they think their role is. One needs to find an architect that thinks of himself/herself as the project manager, not only in design, but also throughout the building process. The architect should be the homeowner's advocate. They need to make frequent, if not daily, visits to the site to ensure that the building of the home reflects the design intent. There are always going to be times when the interpretation of the house plan by the builder differs from that of the architect. The architect needs to be available or on site to ensure that the correct interpretation of the plan is followed. As the construction progresses, there may be opportunities for the addition of features not thought of during the design process. These features should be apparent to the designer and should be discussed with the homeowners as an additional design option. Spontaneous additions to the house plan are additional benefits that a good architect brings to the building process. Also, remember that the architects' fee is negligible in comparison to the construction costs of the home. We know that most people choose not to use an architect because of the added cost. From our perspective, the architect has the most important role in the building of a home. Without them, your house is not truly a custom home.

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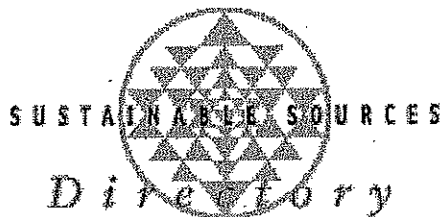
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Contact: Kim Albrightson
Albrightson & Associates
 12827 32nd Street South
 Afton, MN, 55001
 United States

Phone: 651-436-7877
 Cellphone: 612-328-6565
 Website: <http://www.shukka.com>

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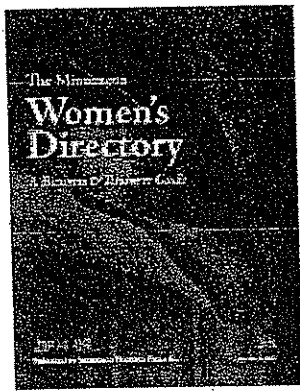
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Kim Clarke Portz LLC

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Grand Meadow MN 55936

Phone: 507-252-9949

Map It

Zenk Read Trygstad & Associates

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Phone: 507-373-0689

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Rochester MN 55904

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Phone: 218-759-2305



M J Architectural Studios

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Bemidji MN 56601

Phone: 218-751-0109



RRA Inc-Richard Rude Architectural

4111 Technology Dr NW Ste 201
Bemidji MN 56601

Phone: 218-751-5316



I & S Engineers & Architects Inc

25 NW 4th St Ste 105
Mankato MN 56002

Phone: 507-387-6651



Keenan Architectural Group

46 N 28th Av
St Cloud MN 56303

Phone: 320-255-5521



Jaunich Paul D Architect

328 3rd St S
Delano MN 55328

Phone: 763-972-3822



Vanman Architects & Builders Inc

669 Winnetka Av N Ste 210
Golden Valley MN 55427

Phone: 763-541-9552



Group II Architects PA

104 W Redwood St
Marshall MN 56258

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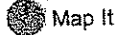
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The Mud Room— A Transition Space that can Transform your Life

Kim Albrightson

Everything requires a source of energy to survive, function, and thrive, A plant or a tree requires sunlight, soil and water; a toy requires batteries, and those batteries require recharging or replacement; people require food, water, exercise and rest. And, for most of us, our home is where we rest and regenerate. Coming home to a peaceful, tranquil, serene environment allows us to calmly unwind and begin the process of regeneration.

The minute you walk in your door, you should feel energy pouring in, replenishing the energy you've been expending at work, at school, at play. This is the essence of ShukkaSM – to make your home the very best core environment for you and your family, transforming your lives and allowing you to radiate your very best back out into the world.

Transforming Your Environment

When people ask me "What space within our homes has the greatest consequence to our lives?" My answer is not the living room or the master suite or even the kitchen – it is the mud room or what is better termed the transition space. In order to maintain an organized home, hence a peaceful existence within your home environment, you must begin with the initial transition space between the chaos of the outside world and your own personal oasis.

So how, you may ask, do you go about accomplishing this? Well, if you are building a new home or if you live in an existing home and are renovating – make your transition space a priority during the planning process. If you would like to stay in your current home without making major renovations – create transition elements in areas close to your family's daily exit and entry point in any creative way possible!

For my clients, our first step in the design process is a Life Style Analysis Interview. As part of that interview we discover virtually every item that comes in and out of your home. Then, as we create our program plan, we determine the most functional, attractive and time efficient options to accommodate all those things within the transition space. By observing and documenting your family's daily routine along with any sidelines, hobbies, et cetera, you too can discover ways to support your requirements.

EXHIBIT G

Transition Space Elements

I'd like to share a few examples of how transition space elements can make a difference in your family's lives.

PROBLEM: "Our Mud room is rather dark and uninviting. Why should my guest entrance be more welcoming than the space we have to enter every day?"

SOLUTION: Your private entrance should be one of the most captivating spaces in your home. After all it's the first thing you see when you walk in the door! Using energy, light and continuity, you can create a welcoming, even inspiring space. First, try to invite the sunlight in from at least two directions. If your space doesn't allow for windows on two sides, you can borrow light from an adjacent room by aligning the door toward the natural light. Another way to borrow light is to install clerestory glazing, glass block or art glass within your interior walls. Mirrors are fabulous for reflecting light and energy, and serve as a functional element for the transition space. The solutions you choose should be done with intention, coordinating the aesthetics with the motif of the rest of your home to create the critical element of continuity.

PROBLEM: "Everyone walks in and dumps their jackets, shoes, boots, backpacks, briefcase, purse, sunglasses wherever they find a spot – usually the table, countertop or floor. How do I 'train' my family to be neat and organized?"

SOLUTION: Give everyone a dedicated space for their "stuff." A great way to do that is to utilize your vertical space. You can create individual lockers somewhere in the transition space and assign everyone a customized unit for their very own. New, custom built-in cabinetry is one way, or simply install vertical dividers in your existing coat closet, then incorporate hooks, drawers, adjustable shelves or bins to personalize each locker. This one change will increase the organization of your home ten-fold bringing a sense of calm you never thought possible!

PROBLEM: "My wife and children love our two cats. I, on the other hand, would love to get rid of them! Every morning, as I am getting ready to leave, I inhale the aroma of the cat box and inevitably step on the litter that has been strewn all over the floor. By the time I get to my car I am really fuming. I know this carries over to my demeanor at work, let alone when I come home and have to deal with it all over again! Is there a way to make everyone happy?"

SOLUTION: Here is a perfect example of how much little details can transform our lives. Simply create a kitty litter cabinet, within the transition space, maybe under the bench or in a cabinet. (You can even install a central vacuum sweep outlet here.) The cat box is out of sight, odors are controlled, litter is contained, and the irritation dad once felt virtually every morning is gone. This carries through to his relationships at work, and the benefits are poignant in his relationships with his family. He slips off his shoes and walks (litter free) into the kitchen where he kisses his wife (rather than complaining to her for the 1000th time about the cat). The children see him as more approachable, loving and calm as they can sense his lack of anger and frustration. He may actually even pet the cat! Mission accomplished! By changing one typically overlooked detail we have effected at least four or five people, creating

a transformation.

Some other examples of transition space elements to consider are coat storage, shoe storage, benches for taking off those shoes and boots, a message center and stand up desk for daily mail sorting, storage for and display of children's art supplies and school papers, and hanging/drying space for athletic equipment and clothing. Be certain to incorporate intentional space for your pets, too. Consider feeding dishes and dispensers, food storage, drinking dishes (or a doggie-height sink), and the all important cat litter box cabinet! No laundry? We'll go into that in the next column!

Your home is the place where you regenerate. Creating a welcoming, functional, inspiring transition space to begin the process of regeneration will bring you peace and calm, and can transform your lives and your world in ways you never knew were possible. Even if you only incorporate one small change, with awareness, you will find the treasure.

Kim Albrightson is an inventor, architectural designer, and owner of Albrightson & Associates, a residential design firm. Her ShukkaSM philosophy is focused on solutions that increase function while simultaneously adding comfort to our homes. Dedicated to helping people simplify their lives, Kim shares her life transforming movement with others through lectures, radio, television, and published articles. She can be reached at 612-328-6565, kim@shukka.com, or by visiting www.shukka.com.

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It's the Home of Your Dreams—Make it Beautiful and Functional

Kim Albrightson

You've made the decision to design and build your dream home. This is it. But what should you consider when you want a home that is beautiful and functional? How do you get what you really want? And just as important, what do you need to function efficiently within your home?

Begin by thinking in terms of form following function. Who wants a house that doesn't function? And likewise, who wants a house that functions but has an aesthetically boring form? With a little thought and planning, you can have both unbelievable function and extraordinary beauty. When you get right down to it, creating the aesthetic form by allowing the functional elements to purposefully flow is what ultimately makes us feel comfortable in our homes.

Many times a homeowner doesn't know how increasing the function in a home will improve their quality of life and what aesthetic details will add to how they feel. I've had clients tell me that the homes I design for them are so functional that they literally save time by living in them. My designs are based on what I call "Shukka," which are ideas that incorporate time and space savings, ergonomics, and comfort where form follows function. Shukka is not a style, like Prairie or Victorian, but simply my approach to home design that I've honed over the years. It involves questioning the way things have traditionally been done and analyzing them to see if there is a better way.

The first and most important thing any designer can do is to listen to what the client wants and learn how they function in their home. In my company we begin with a Lifestyle Analysis Interview, in which the homeowners and I virtually walk, room-by-room, through their dream home. I then take what I hear, combined with what I know about form, and transform it into a design unique to each homeowner. The homeowner also helps in defining the aesthetic and personal details for their home, such as a cherished heirloom or a distinctive pattern. One home started with an oval set between columns at the front entry. The soft curve of that oval was then carried throughout the home with barrel vaults at the ceilings, radiuses at the decks, counter tops, and built-in tables, and ovals of cobalt glass set into art glass windows and cabinets, etc. Having such details in your home makes it extraordinarily unique and shows

design purpose.

Shukka elements help make your home functional and pleasing. These elements—timesaving, organization, flow, ergonomics, light, and continuity—are important to consider in your home design.

Timesaving Elements

Timesaving elements save you time while living in your home. How much time do you spend opening and closing the cabinet doors in your kitchen? Believe it or not, the average person opens and closes their dishes cabinet door about 20 times a day and it takes about two seconds to open and close a door each time. This totals to about four hours in a year. Recognizing where time is wasted allows me to find timesaving solutions. I like to use open shelving for the everyday dishes, which reduces the time spent opening doors and reveals the dishes at a glance. As a bonus the colorful dishware adds color to the space. Four hours saved. What would you do with an extra four hours? And this is only the time saved with your daily dishes!

The master dressing room provides additional time saving features. I design the dressing room to combine clothing storage with getting dressed. No more running back and forth from your closet to the dressers in your bedroom. The washer and dryer are also located in the dressing room, which saves an enormous amount of time and work each day. Dirty clothing can be sorted as soon as they are taken off and clean clothes can be put back on open shelving, which again, saves time by eliminating doors to open and close.

While these are just some examples, Shukka timesaving elements can be incorporated throughout your home.

Organization Begins in the Mudroom

The mudroom is one of the most critical elements within your home. It sets the stage for organization and eliminates clutter. Not only should this room provide easy entry and exit, it should also contain convenient hanging for coats and jackets, space for shoes and boots, and ample storage for all of the items that come and go out of your house.

Benches that double as storage are a must to make it easy to sit and remove shoes. Storing shoes in cubbies or shelving in the mudroom, instead of in your bedroom closet, helps to keep a cleaner home. You might also want to consider adopting a Shukka "socks only" policy. Wearing socks actually dusts the floors as you walk around which helps to preserve flooring surfaces and reduces maintenance of the floors!

Wall pegs or hooks make it convenient to hang coats, jackets and sweaters. Extra coats can be stored on open rods and shelves—I will even ask homeowners the length of their coats and jackets to design rods and shelves that maximize the use of space. With Shukka design each family member can also have their own customized locker, designed as open units to save time.

Your mudroom can have many functions. It is the perfect place to keep a home workstation for paying bills, sorting mail, and filing kid's schoolwork; to store and accommodate gardening and hobby needs; and to consolidate pet care and maintenance to name just a few. When the mudroom is designed with order in mind, your whole home will be clutter and maintenance free!

Comfort Depends on Flow

To design a comfortable home, flow should be intentional. Movement between rooms is as important as the rooms themselves. To create a feeling of connection, the space between rooms should be kept to a minimum and be incorporated into the rooms whenever possible, nearly eliminating the need for hallways.

The kitchen, dining area and living room can be opened up to encourage interaction with family and friends. Other rooms such as bedrooms, alcoves, and even a child's play space, can encourage solitary time or valuable intimate time for couples.

An important feature to help define flow is the stairway. It has the potential to exemplify your home's architecture and can beautifully connect the living spaces. In some instances, the stairway can also be additionally functional, providing its own seating and storage areas.

Ergonomically Speaking

It is possible to design ease and safety into a home. Ergonomics has gained attention in the workplace, but it is equally important throughout your home.

The kitchen provides many good opportunities to incorporate Shukka ergonomics. First, the dishwasher is raised, to eliminate the need to bend while loading and unloading dishes. A raised countertop allows for greater ease in preparing and cooking meals and a lowered countertop helps when mixing, rolling, and kneading or when working with children. Special storage/step drawers can be designed at sinks and under high cabinetry to make them accessible for both children and adults.

The Shukka stairway incorporates ergonomics by decreasing the riser height and increasing the tread width and depth. Adding a landing can make for a brief resting spot as well as create a purposeful point of interest. While these simple adjustments will typically increase the square footage required for the stairway, the comfort you feel will be smooth instead of "trudging up and down the stairs."

Energize with Light

Light equates to energy and transforms a home and the people living in it—an important consideration in the Midwest, where sunlight is reduced during the winter months. Whenever possible I like to create light from all four sides of a room, even if only one exterior wall is available for windows. Using "borrowed light" is a Shukka technique that can be accomplished in many different ways. Placing glass block, transom or clerestory windows within the interior walls and/or aligning doorways and windows from adjacent rooms can accomplish a similar

feeling to outside light. Strategically placing mirrors within the rooms will reflect light as well as add a sense of spaciousness.

Because people tend to orient themselves toward light, the lightest areas of your home should also be the most important. Areas "washed" with light, which is created by incorporating artificial, indirect lighting that bounces off walls and ceilings, will naturally draw you and your guests to these rooms. It is best to avoid direct lighting such as recessed cans and other fixtures with bulbs exposed to the naked eye. They are uncomfortable to view and typically provide hot spots of light rather than a soothing, inviting wash of light. Incorporating task lighting will supplement the overall lighting and provide adequate light for activities such as cooking and reading:

Beauty lies within Continuity of the Aesthetics

No matter what architectural style you prefer for your home, the interior and exterior should complement and reflect each other throughout the design. I design from the inside out to create design continuity between these two, often disjointed, elements. This also ensures that your home will be pleasing from all points of view and allows for integrated details that create an unmistakable relationship throughout the home.

Space planning is an art. When you pay attention to the function in your home you can actually reduce the overall square footage of your home and increase the spacious feeling. And the money my clients save by avoiding wasted space can be spent on unique aesthetic details throughout their homes—details that distinguish their home from anyone else's.

Getting What You Want

Designing your home, especially your dream home, can be overwhelming. How important is it to you to have a beautiful and functional home? How do you live and what do you want? What do you need that you didn't even realize existed to make your lives easier? Recognizing that form follows function is a good first step to designing a functional home that has timeless beauty.

Finding a designer who will make your dream a reality is the next step. Shukka elements can be incorporated into any good home design. The point is to work with an architect or designer who listens to you, understands your needs, and is willing to seek out a perfect solution for you and your family. Look for someone who is experienced, who practices form following function, and who is creative and analytical. Don't be afraid to ask questions and to request specific elements in your home. Review the designer's portfolio and walk through some homes she's designed. Make sure she'll act as your advocate with the builder during the building process, especially when problems arise. Trusting your designer is critical—don't just settle. Seek the help of a professional who is the right fit for you. Ultimately you will have a home that is extraordinarily beautiful, unmistakably yours and extremely functional!

Kim Albrightson is the founder and president of Albrightson & Associates. She has over 20 years of architectural design experience and has been designing new and transforming existing homes into Shukka homes since 1994. Her passion for designing homes is intense

and she shares her expertise as well as her creative and analytical talent with people who want homes that are functional, beautiful, and distinctively their own. For more information about Shukka and Albrightson & Associates, visit the web site at www.shukka.com.

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March 22, 2003

A featured speaker at International Market Square Home Design Show, Kim Albrightson, architectural designer and owner of ALBRIGHTSON & ASSOCIATES presented SHUKKA® — *The Holistic Approach to Architectural Design.*

February 5-9, 2003

Kim Albrightson was a featured speaker at the 2003 Home & Garden Show in Minneapolis. Her topic was SHUKKA® — *The Holistic Approach to Architectural Design.*

January 19, 2003

Kim Albrightson spoke to homeowners about SHUKKA® — *The Holistic Approach to Architectural Design* at The Builder's Association of the Twin Cities.

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